



REGION 11 CHICAGO EMS SYSTEM POLICY	Title: EMS Transport of Service and Support Animals
	Section: Transportation
	Approved: EMS Medical Directors Consortium
	Effective: December 6, 2023

EMS TRANSPORT OF SERVICE AND SUPPORT ANIMALS

I. DEFINITIONS

- A. ADA Requirements - Service Animals: The Department of Justice published revised final regulations implementing the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 2010 which contain updated requirements, including the 2010 Standards for Accessible Design.
- B. Service Animal: Any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. Examples of service animal tasks include:
 - 1. A person who uses a wheelchair may have a dog that is trained to retrieve objects for them.
 - 2. A person with depression may have a dog that is trained to perform a task to remind them to take their medication.
 - 3. A person with PTSD may have a dog that is trained to lick their hand to alert them to an oncoming panic attack.
 - 4. A person who has epilepsy may have a dog that is trained to detect the onset of a seizure and then help the person remain safe during the seizure.
- C. Support Animal: An emotional support animal is any animal that provides emotional support alleviating one or more symptoms or effects of a person's disability. Emotional support animals provide companionship, relieve loneliness, and sometimes help with depression, anxiety, and certain phobias, but do not have special training to perform tasks that assist people with disabilities. Emotional support animals are not limited to dogs.

II. EMS RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Service Animals

- 1. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), if a person with a disability requires transportation in an ambulance, accommodations must be made to allow the service animal to accompany the patient to the hospital.
- 2. A service animal must be under the control of its handler. Under the ADA, service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless the individual's disability prevents using these devices or these devices interfere with the service animal's safe, effective performance of tasks. In that case, the individual must maintain control of the animal through voice, signal, or other effective controls.



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3. When it is not obvious what service an animal provides, only limited inquiries are allowed. EMS Personnel may ask two questions:
 - a. Is the dog a service animal required because of a disability?
 - b. What work or task has the dog been trained to perform?
4. EMS Personnel cannot ask about the person's disability, require medical documentation, require a special identification card or training documentation for the dog, or ask that the dog demonstrate its ability to perform the work or task.
5. In addition to the provisions about service dogs, the Department of Justice's ADA regulations have a separate provision about miniature horses that have been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities and permitting these animals when reasonable.
6. EMS Personnel are not required to provide care for or supervision of a service animal.

B. Support Animals

1. Dogs whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as service animals under the ADA.
2. Support dogs have not been trained to perform a specific job or task and therefore do not qualify as service animals under the ADA.
3. There is no federal legal obligation to allow emotional support dogs to accompany a patient in the ambulance.
4. The decision to allow the patient and dog to remain together is based on the patient's need and ability to control the animal, as well as the crew's ability to transport the dog safely.

C. Transport of Service and Support Animals

1. EMS personnel should notify the receiving hospital that they are transporting a patient with a service or support animal.
2. Following the transport of a service or support animal, EMS personnel should ensure proper and complete decontamination and sterilization of the interior of the ambulance including stretchers, the patient compartment, and all contaminated medical equipment before returning to service.



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D. References

1. US Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division: [ADA Requirements: Service Animals | ADA.gov](https://www.ada.gov)
2. Illinois Attorney General, Service Animals: [Illinois Attorney General - Service Animals guide \(state.il.us\)](https://www.state.il.us)